

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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GIAQUINTA: STATE BUDGET HARMS CHILDREN, SENIORS, TAXPAYERS

INDIANAPOLIS – State Rep. Ben GiaQuinta (D-Fort Wayne) said today that the most vulnerable of Allen County's citizens and all of its taxpayers will face an unpleasant surprise when they see the results of the Daniels Administration's first state budget.

"Since I have always stood for playing straight with the taxpayers, it is very disturbing to see that the governor has played down the local property tax increases that will be required to fund the budget," GiaQuinta said. "More importantly, the failure to fund services for seniors and our children's education is a disgrace."

GiaQuinta was particularly upset at what he called a "bait and switch program" to fund local schools.

"The governor claims he included adequate school funding in the budget, but he did not tell the citizens that the budget leaves a shortfall of almost \$10 million for local taxpayers to fund," GiaQuinta said. "The governor's May surprise will hit in next year's property tax bills, but our children will feel the pain much sooner. There are many costs that schools have no control over, such as utilities and health insurance. The Republican budget provides no increase to pay for those costs."

GiaQuinta said the greatest disappointment with this budget is that it marks a complete reversal from the bipartisan efforts over the past several years to take funding off the backs of local property taxpayers and shift it to the state.

"The impact of the governor's policy on local home ownership could be dramatic as the property tax increases become known," he warned.

Education is not the only service left behind in this budget, GiaQuinta said. More than 250 area seniors are waiting for home health care through the state's CHOICE program, but the governor has asked that they stay on the waiting list while doling out tax breaks to businesses.

"The governor and the Republican Legislature made choices that will hurt those Hoosiers we should be looking to help," GiaQuinta said.

"Gov. Daniels claims he is balancing the budget, but it is way out of balance in terms of who it hurts and who it helps," he continued. "It is time for the governor to level with the taxpayers, because it is only a matter of time before the truth of his budget becomes painfully evident."

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This news release can be accessed on the Internet at www.IN.gov/H80